

Report No. 2 from the Peace Section Task  
Force on Women in Church & Society  
October, 1973

Peace Section Assembly  
November 9-10, 1973  
Camp Friedenswald, Cassopolis, Michigan  
(Route 3 on Shavehead Lake - 20 miles north of Elkhart)  
Tentative Program - Subject to Change

THE INTERDEPENDENCE OF MEN AND WOMEN

Friday, November 9, 1973

12:00-2:00 Registration, Room Assignments  
2:00 THE DEVELOPMENT OF WOMEN'S ROLES - Panel Discussion  
3:30 Small Group Discussions (Possible Topics: Sexuality, Alternatives to  
Marriage, Personhood, masculine/feminine similarities, 'family'  
structures, abortion, male/female sex roles in families, single  
adults)  
7:00 SOCIALIZATION AND INTERDEPENDENCE  
Film, "Growing Up Female: As Six Become One"  
Discussion  
9:00 Small Group Discussions (Repeat of afternoon sessions)

Saturday, November 10, 1973

9:00 WOMEN AND RELIGION  
10:45 Josephine M. Ford, Professor of New Testament, Notre Dame  
Small Group Discussions (Possible Topics: Language barriers, house  
churches, ordination, seminary, OT & NT analysis)  
1:15 Play: "Adam and Even"  
2:30 DIRECTIONS FOR CHANGE  
(Special reports on the politics of housework, women and welfare,  
vocational & educational opportunities, Equal Rts. Amendment;  
Open mike for reports of efforts being made to work for inter-  
dependence.)  
7:00 Discussion of Peace Section Concerns and Where Do We Go From Here  
9:00 Worship Service

IN ORDER TO MAKE THE NECESSARY ARRANGEMENTS, THE PEACE SECTION IS ASKING THAT EVERYONE REGIS-  
TER IN ADVANCE. SEND THE FORM BELOW TO MCC PEACE SECTION, 21 S. 12th St., Akron, PA 17501.  
DIRECTIONS WILL BE SENT TO HELP YOU GET THERE.

Registration: \$1.00/day  
Lodging: Dormitories or cabins - \$3.00/night; semi-private rooms, 2-4 persons each -  
\$4.25/night.  
Linens: You may bring your own linens or have them provided for \$2.00.  
Meals: The camp will begin serving for the large group Friday evening.  
Breakfast - \$.95; Lunch - \$1.55; Dinner - \$1.80  
Economy Class: Facilities will also be available in the Lodge for up to 50. People will  
be on the floor and must supply their own sleeping bags, etc. People stay-  
ing in the Lodge will be able to cook their own meals provided they bring  
the utensils needed to prepare them. The cost for the staying and cooking  
in the Lodge will be \$2.75/day.

I plan to attend the November 9-10 Peace Section Assembly at Camp Friedenswald.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Accomodations Preferred:

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Dorm, Cabin, or private room  
 Lodge

(zip) \_\_\_\_\_

Nights Needing Accomodations:

Friday  Saturday

## MARIAN FRANZ DISCUSSES ORDINATION AND THE MINISTER'S WIFE

This month, the progress report on ordination, approved by the GCMC Committee on the Ministry, will appear in The Mennonite along with reactions by a number of individuals. One section reads: "Affirming that in Christ there is neither male nor female, and that God is no respector of person, neither race nor class nor sex should be considered barriers in calling a pastor."

Marian Franz, member of the Committee on the Ministry, suspects that while some Mennonites would like to see a woman ordained to the ministry, they would not want to see 20 ordained. "The Church seems to be satisfied with tokenism." Marian hopes that the statement on ordination will stimulate dialogue on the ordination question and other issues relating to women in the church.

Included in this dialogue, Marian believes, should be an examination of the role of the minister's wife. According to Marian, some women derive their status and identity as a minister's wife, and this is good. Others, however, chafe under the congregation's expectations. "I recall my annoyance and frustrations as I sat in college discussions on the minister's wife. The way the minister's wife was presented was insulting. We read books which said that the minister's wife should not bang the dishes in the kitchen when her husband prepared his sermon. She should always have a clean bathroom since the bathroom is the index by which parishioners judge the cleanliness of a home. There was also an element of dehumanization. If the wife could do a task better than her husband, she should stifle her talent. In other words, 'Don't use your gifts if they appear to compete.' We were not treated as people with gifts of our own. Instead, we were to fit into a mold. When I was a pastor's wife in Chicago, there was no precedent or expectations. Now, if my husband were to enter the pastorate again, I would have some anxieties.

"We need to redefine what it means for a wife to support her minister-husband. Can a congregation accept a minister's wife if she is a full-time public accountant? I think that the accountant who has her own career can be very supportive of her husband's ministry without being chairwoman of the women's missionary project or a Sunday School teacher.

"A clinical psychologist who spoke to the Committee on the Ministry stated that a minister's obedience to God is often viewed as dedication to church first, family second, and self last. For the minister's wife, the hierarchy is changed: family, church, self. Psychologists usually say that the development of the self should come first. Tension and confusion result when the church, family, and self compete. Our Committee is now planning more marriage enrichment seminars for pastors and their wives, realizing that their relationship at home affects their relationship with the congregation.

"As far as the role of women in Mennonite churches, let's face it; we're a long way from achieving 50/50 representation on boards and committees. However, I do feel that the Mennonite church has given status to women in the sense that we have not been viewed as sex objects. But I'd like to see the church advance much further. I think that women who want to see the church move ahead should talk about oneness, not sameness as we discuss the beauty and freedom given by one Lord, one Spirit for the expression of our gifts. I would hope that church women and men would also give greater status to the role of parenting."

Marian Franz works part-time as co-director of Dunamis, a mission growing out of the Church of the Saviour (Washington, D.C.), which is seeking ways to be faithful to both the pastoral and the prophetic roles of the church as Christians relate to political power structures. Marian, mother of three children, is a graduate of Bethel College and Mennonite Biblical Seminary. She is presently serving on the General Conference Committee on the Ministry, Commission on Education, and the Department of Literature Development.

## THE ROLE OF WOMEN IN THE MENNONITE CHURCH

In the August report of the Peace Section Task Force on Women, a general overview of women's role in church and society was presented. In this second report, we will begin focusing on attitudes and practices in Mennonite churches.

Two Mennonite sociologists - J. Howard Kauffman (Goshen College) and Leland D. Harder (Mennonite Biblical Seminary) - recently completed a study of members in five denominations: Mennonite Church, General Conference Mennonite Church, Mennonite Brethren Church, Brethren in Christ Church, and the Evangelical Mennonite Church. The findings of the Church Member Profile will be published this fall by Herald Press. Listed below are responses to the three questions in the study relating to the role of women in church and society. Consent from Kauffman or Harder should be obtained before printing any of the data or interpretative remarks.

	MC	GCMC	MBC	BIC	EMC	Total Percent
--	----	------	-----	-----	-----	---------------

In the future should larger numbers of qualified women be elected or appointed to church boards and committees at denomination, district, and congregational levels?

No	37	30	47	36	47	39
Undecided	34	30	26	28	31	30
Yes	29	40	26	36	22	31

Should the policy on ordinations in your denomination be changed to allow for the ordination of women to the Christian ministry?

No	66	41	69	58	65	61
Uncertain	22	29	20	25	23	23
Yes	12	30	12	17	12	16

Do you believe that women in Canadian and American societies are being discriminated against and denied certain basic rights?

No	64	63	72	69	70	67
Uncertain	21	17	14	19	19	18
Yes	15	20	14	12	10	14

Kauffman and Harder begin their section on "The Role of Women in the Church" by quoting from H.S. Bender:

In the early Anabaptist movement women played an important role. The Anabaptist emphasis upon voluntary membership, adult baptism, and personal commitment inevitably opened up new perspectives for women. The court records in the Swiss-South German areas as well as in Holland show that they could and did give vigorous and intelligent independent testimonies of their own to their faith, and shared martyrdom unflinchingly with the men, although the number of male martyrs reported generally outnumbered the women two to one. . . . Later, after the creative period of Anabaptism was past, the settled communities and congregations reverted more to the typical patriarchal attitude of European culture.

Article 14 of the Mennonite Church Confession of Faith is illustrative of the traditional view of a woman's place in the church.

We believe that in their relation to the Lord men and women are equal, for in Christ there is neither male nor female. But in the order of creation God has fitted man and woman for differing functions; man has been given a primary leadership role, while the woman is especially fitted for nurture and service. Being in Christ does not nullify these natural endowments, either in the home or in the church. The New Testament symbols of man's headship are his short hair and uncovered head while praying or prophesying, and the symbols of woman's role are her long hair and her veiled head. The acceptance by both men and women of the order of creation in no way limits their rightful freedom, but rather ensures their finding the respective roles in which they can most fruitfully and happily serve.

Kauffman and Harder point out that "The response of the samples of members of the five denominations to three questions probing the role of women indicates considerably more adherence to the traditional patriarchal view than to the radical Anabaptist view."

The authors arrive at a composite "Role of Women" scale by giving a "yes" answer a score of 2, an "uncertain" answer 1, and a "no" answer 0. Thus, the scale scores range from zero to six. A low score indicates negative feelings towards women's liberation.

#### Role of Women Scale

		MC	GCMC	MBC	BIC	EMC	Total Percent
0	LOW	26	21	37	27	34	29
1-2	LOWER MIDDLE	43	34	38	37	41	39
3-4	UPPER MIDDLE	20	27	17	26	18	22
5-6	HIGH	9	18	8	9	7	10
	Total Percent	99	100	100	99	100	100
	Total No.	1185	601	697	600	437	3520
	MEAN SCORE	1.9	2.6	1.6	2.0	1.6	2.0

In their analysis, Kauffman and Harder write: "We note that the GCMC scores highest (2.6 mean score in a range of zero to six), and the EMC and MBC score lowest (mean score of 1.6). Although the status of women in the GCMC is relatively higher, with the right to vote and hold office in the church, in no denomination can it be said that her status is very high.

". . . the more open attitude toward the role of women in church and society has its source in higher education, greater social compassion (welfare attitudes, political role of the church, and the social witness of the church), and less prejudice regarding Negroes, Catholics, and Jews. It is especially interesting to note that male respondents scored significantly higher on the Role of Women scale than females. (male: 2.3; female: 1.9) Thus, women struggling against tradition for the cause of equal participation should be aware that their own sex is the greater supporter of the traditional view on this issue."

"WE HAVE AT LEAST BEGUN"  
THE MENNONITE CHURCH - ASSEMBLY '73  
HARRISONBURG, VA  
by Ruth Stoltzfus

On the face of it, not much new ground was broken during Assembly '73 with respect to women and the church. The interest group that met daily to discuss the subject spent much of its time establishing the more recognizable problems: societal stereotypes that limit men frequently and women especially, the church's continued reluctance to use the administrative, speaking, or leadership abilities of fully half its members, widespread use of male-saturated religious language and "God-talk," and finally, the church's apparent failure to initiate the whole question long ago by way of its own Christian imperatives. (One woman spoke a bit impatiently, "These discussions are fine, but I'd like to know why it has taken this long for the church to get around to it." Up front a career mother of five promptly stood for the mike. "If I may answer that, we've held ourselves back from full expression for so long because we were afraid some men would feel threatened. We need to educate our men." She sat down to applause.) These concerns, important and consuming as they are, are hardly headliners at this stage of the game.

But then, the women and men who came to the informal discussion weren't out to make headlines. Some were assuredly one-timers, intent on shopping the bazaar of activities, displays, "happenings," performances, and meetings that proliferated. Others were just as certainly repeaters getting their first exposure to discussion of such issues in an organized or collective church setting. Significantly, the group had to relocate twice to accommodate snowballing numbers which multiplied by at least six the thirty or so originally anticipated. These people, along with the few veterans of consciousness-raising groups and women's caucuses in years past, were in the end all faced with the speculation: what are the mechanics of real change on such a level in a sister-brotherhood?

We'll see in two years time whether one method at least is helpful. In their official session Assembly delegates were given a document "The Role of Women in the Church," prepared by the Mennonite Board of Congregational Ministries. This is breaking new ground of a sort, for it's the first the subject has come up for consideration by such a broad, official MC body. The paper is basically a study guide that raises "Issues at Stake" and outlines three possible approaches: 1. distinctive male and female roles 2. gradual modification of traditional role concepts 3. roles determined by spiritual gifts, not by sex. The last section of the document excerpts the Illinois Mennonite Conference study which recommended the ordination of Emma Richards.

The problem with the first section was that five of the eight issues raised centered on interpretation of Pauline writings and concepts--rather an odd approach to take when you're writing for followers of Jesus. This point was made, along with a variety of others, during the open delegate session where women and men in even numbers packed the EMC chapel to decide the fate of the document. Or I should say uneven numbers; the deciding was up to the 250-odd male and the 22 or so female delegates seated in the front center section.

The first response was personal. The newly-elected chairperson of the Akron Mennonite Church and her minister stood to read a chronicle of events leading to her election as congregational chairperson. It was then decided that discussion should center on specifics about the document itself so a vote could be taken on whether to recommend it to Mennonite congregations for study.

Comments thereafter were addressed to problems such as wording and, more important, to the scope of the document. It was here that the absence of material on Jesus

and women or on the problem of male terminology was noted. Requests ranged from inclusion in the document of Anabaptist models and perspectives to more development of the concept of submission and headship. One brother took the mike to say, "I believe the men of the Mennonite Church have sinned against the women of the Mennonite Church. I'd like to see an apology included in this document."

One felt, as things progressed, that it was with great care that some participants skirted their own cherished certainties on the subject, while at the same time proposing corrections or additions that would give those ideas exposure. We are, most of us, evangelists at heart.

Thus, for better or for worse, discussion never moved in on just the issues themselves, or on to the subject of ordination for women. That will be up to the churches. The delegates' unanimous vote sent the document off to "Mennonite" its way through North American congregations for the next two years (after a second round with the writing committee for considerable doctoring and expansion.)

In the sum of it: we have at least begun. We may even have begun in an organized, undercurrent way that will prove superior to anything that could have been achieved by adoption of a far-ranging resolution now. So we're giving ourselves two years. I'll admit I'm left with the apprehension that congregational searching will deteriorate into debate; that women (and men) will be forced to fight, here in 1973, a ridiculous battle for mere equality against "headship" and "submission" adherents who, no matter how charitable in their definitions of those words or how glowing in their testimonials, still frighten me.

And yet here, too, may be the beginnings of a new lease on some Anabaptist modes of life. When women talk about universal and free use of gifts I can see that old priesthood of believers emerging, as when the lot chooses a man who is otherwise of no higher station than those around him. When we question the need to limit function because of sex we make way for leadership by females with the non-authoritarian tradition that is the trademark of womankind, and we potentially reach right into our ideas of authority, hierarchy, and headship. It all might just de-catholicize us once again.

-----  
*Ruth Stoltzfus, graduate of Eastern Mennonite College, is currently attending law school in Boston. She is a member of the MCC Peace Section and on the Task Force on Women.*  
-----

Arlene M. Mark, 3139 Frailey Drive, Elkhart, IN 46514 sent us her comments on the Assembly.

1. You can assume almost any stance on the role of women and prove it by scripture. Somewhere the spirit of understanding of the entire thrust of the message of freedom must be expounded.

2. Can we study the role of women without also studying the inter-relating role of men as it now exists in society? It is sub-Christian for women to usurp positions from men. How do we subtly let them give us these positions without their being threatened?

3. Some of the delegates were exposed to new ideas and will consider them, but I'm positive some will only be driven to prove their original positions.

NOTICE to women in the Lancaster area: November 4, 1973, 2-4 p.m. Edith Daehling, National Secretary for Specialized Learning Experiences for Lutheran Church Women will speak on Women and The Church, specifically "Sexism in Religious Education." Check your newspapers for location.

## NOMINATING COMMITTEE SEEKS NAMES OF WOMEN

General Conference Mennonite Church: The Nominating Committee of the General Conference Mennonite Church will be meeting November 28-29 to prepare the slate for elections to conference offices. Elections will be held in August, 1974. There is one woman on the seven-member Nominating Committee.

Listed below are the 27 offices to be filled. Three of these positions have been held by women. (Secretary - Hedy Sawadsky, Commission on Education - Marian Franz, Bertha Harder) These three women are eligible for reelection. Send the names of persons you would recommend to: Heinz Janzen, General Conference Mennonite Church, 722 Main St., Box 347, Newton, KS 67114. For information about the nature of the assignment and the terms, ask your minister for the 1973-74 Handbook of Information, pages 16-29, or write Heinz Janzen for a copy.

President	Commission on Overseas Mission (3)
Vice-President	Commission on Home Ministries (3)
Secretary	Commission on Education (3)
Program Committee (2)	Division of Administration (4)
General Board (3)	Mennonite Seminary Board (5)
Schowalter Foundation (1)	

It might be noted that one of the functions of the General Board is to "appoint the major conference staff members, designate members to the standing committees, and fill vacancies that occur in boards, commissions, or other agencies."

The nominations are only the first step. During the next few months, local congregations will be selecting delegates who will be voting at the '74 elections. Meanwhile, individuals must engage in discussions with church people on the need for more women in leadership positions.

### READERS' RESPONSE

- *Phyllis Pellman Good, 2176 G Lincoln Hwy. East, Lancaster, PA 17602 writes: "I'd be interested in supporting a women's group in the general Lancaster area (12-15 people perhaps) that would regularly meet to interrogate, confess, advise, befriend each other in the search for practical 'liberation.'"*

- *Lois Kemrer Eckman, 516 Capri Rd., Lancaster, PA 17603 answered the question - Is the role of women in your church changing? - with these remarks: "Yes, and it's all uphill. The males are pulling hard on the reins. A few men in our church have the influence with the men to persuade them to cooperate with the desire of a number of the women for equal representation of women and youth on the church council and wherever such representation would be desirable and necessary. Also an effort was and is being made to impress upon the men the necessity of equal representation of men in Sunday School and Bible School work. (So far that's gone down like a lead balloon. We must be careful that we women do not, once more, end up doing not only our 'women's work' in the church but also our part in the governing aspect of the congregation.)*

"Several women in our church are interested in feminism; however, the implied or real threat of retaliation (male) from husbands and/or the church fathers inhibits them. Somehow we must give women the courage to break free from their bonds of submissiveness and non-aggression. But I realize, in a Christian family, where the Bible itself reinforces man as THE MAN, it is not easy for a woman attempting self-actualization. As you know, an insubordinate woman deserves punishment. I therefore hesitate to judge the woman who is afraid to go against her husband's wishes. Yes, especially in a 'Christian' marriage!"

Lois passes on this idea: "Instead of a Mother's Day worship service this past year, we engineered a 'Happy Sisters' Day' worship service. Women of all ages took part, and

they had a ball. Everyone received a carnation, since all have or had a mother. Hymns, prayers, Bible readings, 2 short sermons were all by and for women. It was feminist."

- Beulah Kauffman, Elkhart, IN, President WMSC: "I've read Report Number 1 several times. We need this kind of forum where concerns relating to the role and status of women in church and society can be focused and articulated. In crusading for any issue, however, there is the danger of losing sight of the larger framework in which that issue is only a part of the total picture. I hope the context for reporting can continue to be authentically Christian, and that readers will be exposed to more than a single viewpoint.

"I appreciated your including something of the historical review as well as current developments; we need both perspectives. But I must admit reacting negatively to "Her-story." I would have no problem at all with calling it history. On the other hand, I was surprised to note your use of "clergyman" when citing the year the first woman was ordained in the United States. Admittedly, these are little things; but it may be such 'little foxes that spoil the vines' in this important issue rather than helping it.

"Referring to God in male terms does not disturb me at this point, and to call it into question is so threatening to many people--women and men--as to cause a lot of resistance and backfire if perceived as an important part of human liberation. I'm glad to be reminded of the male-dominated language and rigid sex-role stereotypes in our printed materials, and I know this is being taken into consideration in the proposed revision of the Herald Press Summer Bible School Series.

"Too little emphasis has been given to Jesus' view and treatment of women. I hope we can have more insights in this area as seen against the background of prevailing attitudes and practices in the society of His time. We also need help in the area of hermeneutics so that we can be more faithful in interpreting the Bible.

"In your 'Note to Readers' at the beginning of Report #1, you state three hopes for your Task Force reports. It seems to me number 2 will be strengthened if your reports can 'make visible and affirm efforts being made by women and men to create. . . .' In my experience there are many men who are for human liberation and who have helped to open the way for more women to discern, develop and exercise their gifts. Twenty-two women delegates to Harrisonburg this summer out of 277 is a small percentage, but it is a definite breakthrough when compared to one woman delegate--the first--to General Conference in Oregon in 1969!"

"I affirm you in your Task Force Assignment, and want to receive future issues of the reports. God give you wisdom and insight for implementing your assignment most effectively."

#### READERS RECOMMEND

Bainton, Roland. Women of the Reformation in Germany and Italy and Women of the Reformation in England and France.

Clinebell, Charlotte. Meet Me in the Middle.

Gilders, George. "Suicide of the Sexes," Harpers, July, 1973. (See rebuttal letters in the September issue.)

Nyce, Dorothy. "Women: In God's Plan and Man's World," Gospel Herald, August 7, 14, 21, 1973.

Stendahl, Krister. The Bible and the Role of Women: A Case Study in Hermeneutics. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1966. \$1.00

Swidler, Arlene. Woman in Man's Church.